REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Pending Claims

Claims 1-5 are pending in this application. Claims 1-5 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Advisory Action and RCE

Applicants have filed a Request for Continued Examination with the present Amendment, following an Advisory Action mailed August 1, 2007 in response to the Amendment filed July 23, 2007. The present Amendment incorporates the changes made to the claims in the Amendment filed July 23, 2007. Additionally, the claims have been amended to clarify the differences between the invention and Ohishi et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,019,945. Applicants' reply to the final Office Action is as follows.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

The Advisory Action indicates that the changes made to the claims as originally presented in the Amendment filed July 23, 2007 and incorporated herein overcome the rejection of claims 3-5 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement and under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention.

In particular, claim 3 has been amended to delete the "specifying means"; and has also

been amended to change the recitation of the "display means" to a -- mode setting screen -- in order to clarify that which applicants regard as the invention. Accordingly, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112 should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Ohishi et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,019,945. Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection in view of the foregoing amendments and for the following reasons.

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the invention is directed to an automatic analyzer having a conveying unit (102) and plural analysis units (103) in combination with a central control device (106) for controlling the conveying unit and the analysis units and an information network connecting the central control device and the analysis units. The claim has been amended further to set forth that the central control device has a function separating each of the analysis units from the information network to enable shut off a power supply of a separated one of the analysis units.

When one analysis unit suffers any failure during an analysis operation, operation of the entire analyzer system continues while the effected analysis unit enters a standby state, separated from the information network, in which power-off is enabled. See page 7, lines 15-19 of the Specification. Further, in the power-off enable mode, it is possible to shut off the power supply to (only) the effected analysis unit by a power-off switch, while maintaining power supply to the entire analyzer system. See page 7, lines 16-21, of the Specification. Further, once the analysis unit is again powered on, system software is loaded into the analyzer

unit and it can again return to an operational state. See page 8, lines 5-7 of the Specification.

In Ohishi, on the other hand, the sample analysis system has plural analysis units each having a control computer 6A – 6G for executing the required processing and control therefor. The output signals from the analysis units are executed by an analysis unit's computers 6A – 6G and the host computer 40 that is connected thereto executes operational control of each analysis portion, the rack transfer system and other necessary portions of the system. See column 4, lines 32 – 42 of Ohishi.

In the rejection, Ohishi is cited at column 9, line 43 to column 10, line 12 for showing the claimed central control device that functions to separate an analysis unit from an information network to enable shut off a power supply of the analysis unit. With respect to column 10, lines 5 – 8, the sample analysis system of Ohishi is disclosed as being maintained even when an analysis unit fails. That is, Ohishi discloses that the failed analysis unit is removed integral with its associated rack transfer mechanism from the conveyor line for repair. However, there is no disclosure of a central control device as claimed by Applicants. Ohishi is silent with regard to the separation of the analysis unit from an information network by to enable shut off of the power supply of the analysis unit, as in the claimed invention. Accordingly, the reference does not anticipate the invention as claimed and therefore withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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